

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) A method of treating endotoxic shock in an animal by ~~comprising~~ inhibiting the generation of ceramide from sphingomyelin, ~~said method comprises comprising~~ the step of~~[:)]~~ administering basic fibroblast growth factor to said animal, ~~wherein said animal has endotoxic shock.~~

2. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein said animal is a human.

3. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein said basic fibroblast growth factor is administered in a daily amount of from about 0.1 mg/kg to about 100 mg/kg.

4. (currently amended) A method of inhibiting endothelial apoptosis resulting from endotoxic shock in an animal by ~~comprising~~ inhibiting the generation of ceramide from sphingomyelin, ~~said method comprises comprising~~ the step of~~[:)]~~ administering basic fibroblast growth factor to said animal, ~~wherein said animal has endotoxic shock.~~

5. (canceled)

6. (original) The method of claim 4, wherein said animal is a human.

7. (original) The method of claim 4, wherein said basic fibroblast growth factor is administered in a daily amount of from about 0.1 mg/kg to about 100 mg/kg.

8-9. (canceled)

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10. (currently amended) A method of treating an individual at risk for sepsis, ~~comprising by~~ preventing endothelial apoptosis resulting from sepsis, said method comprises the step of by inhibiting the generation of ceramide from sphingomyelin, comprising the step of: administering basic fibroblast growth factor to said individual, wherein said fibroblast growth factor prevents endothelial apoptosis resulting from sepsis by inhibiting the generation of ceramide from sphingomyelin.